



### ***Prince Among Slaves: The True Story of an African Prince Sold into Slavery in the American South***

Scholars estimate that there were tens of thousands of African Muslims who came to antebellum America through the transatlantic slave trade. The stories of only a few of them, however, have been preserved.

- What features of Ibrahima's life do you think enabled his remarkable story to be preserved for future generations of Americans?
- What aspects of his story particularly attracted the attention of white Americans? What do you think that tells us about attitudes toward race and religion in antebellum America?

In the overview essay for the "American Stories" series, Kambiz GhaneaBassiri argues that Ibrahima engaged in an act of translation when he wrote down the first chapter of the Qur'an, al-Fatiha, upon being asked to write the Lord's Prayer in Arabic. That is, he, as a Muslim, was writing his version of the Lord's Prayer for a Christian audience and in the process founding common ground between Islam and Christianity. Others have argued that Ibrahima was being subversive and resisting racial and religious hierarchy.

- Discuss how you understand Ibrahima's act.

While Muslims were present in colonial and antebellum America, their lives have for the most part been erased from popular narratives of early American history. This is largely the result of a lack of distinction made between the varying backgrounds of black Africans. It is often argued that their skin color and the institution of slavery erased their earlier cultural and religious heritage in America.

- How do you think including the life stories of African Muslims like Ibrahima changes the way we understand early American history?